



# LINE CLEARING

Keeping your electric utility service safe and reliable.

## Q: What is line clearing?

It is utility maintenance of vegetation near electric utility lines to reduce outages and improve system safety and reliability.

This maintenance function involves tree trimming and may also involve other means of controlling vegetation such as herbicide treatment. Stump removal is not a common utility practice.

## Q: Why is line clearing important?

Tree contact with distribution electric lines is the leading cause of electric customer outages for most utilities in the state and often results in downed power lines.

Clear rights-of-way also allow for improved utility company access to its electric utility lines to assess damages and restore power.

## Q: Do all utilities have line clearing programs?

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) rules require each investor-owned electric utility and cooperative electric utility to adopt a line clearing program that uses industry-recognized guidelines.

## Q: What is the process?

The line clearing process outlined below is common for most routine maintenance work performed by electric distribution utility companies in Michigan but may not be an accurate representation for all companies across the state. Electric utility contact information can also be found on the [MPSC website](https://www.mpsc.state.mi.us/).

### STEP 1

#### Pre-Trim Notification

Customers and residents in the line clearing territory are notified prior to commencing work in the field.

### STEP 2

#### Line Clearing Work

Vegetation is cleared within the utility right-of-way.

Some utility line clearing programs also target hazard (dead or diseased) trees outside of the right-of-way that are a threat to the infrastructure.

### STEP 3

#### Clean-Up Work

Smaller vegetation such as leaves and smaller limbs are mulched or removed while larger wood pieces are left stacked where the line clearing work was performed.

Stumps may be cut near ground-level and treated with herbicide to prevent future growth.